

Port Orford Free Press

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Fattnin' Frogs for Snakes aka The City Budget

– Dr. Obscure

The City of Port Orford proposed budget was presented and discussed at two meetings held this past week, without much, if any, public notice. The proposal was prepared by Finance Director David Johnson, listed as the sole author responsible for its contents.

The proposal suggests to the committee that they take advantage of the “maximum allowed tax rate” (\$2.28 per \$1000). It also recommends that the **surcharges to the water and sewer base rates, as well as the consumption rates for both systems be doubled** over last year.

The proposal states that employees “will receive the minimal increase of 2.0%”. However the documents show that all employees received at least a 7% raise in base wages over last year, and that three employees, including the **Finance Director who prepared the proposal, will receive an 11.23% raise**. In the case of the Finance Director this amounts to a \$6214 per year increase. In addition all furloughs have been canceled and all employees will work full hours this year. [ed: *Must be nice to work for us!*]

Another major unexplained issue is while the proposal states in no uncertain terms on page 2 “the City is self-insured... in the event a current employee .. opens a new claim... we would not fill that vacancy and would use the money budgeted for that position to cover the cost of the claim”. However, \$23,000 is in the current budget for “Unemployment Insurance”... why?

Other similar inconsistencies exist to the extent of another \$40,000. Looks a lot like what we used to call a '**slush fund**' back in the day.

This is your money my friends, and most of the people spending it don't live in our city and deal with the problems they create. You might want to attend the next council meeting when they will vote to adopt this budget.
Just Like Fattnin' Frogs for Snakes..

City Council Meeting

– staff reporter

The Port Orford City Council met Thursday to a full audience in the chambers.

The mayor opened the meeting with a **State Revenue Sharing Hearing**. There was a report of the \$8,900 received from the state, with no questions or input from others.

Due to the large number of requests from citizens, **Citizens Concerns** were limited by the mayor to New Business items, and as such, only two were allowed. **Teresa Kolibaba** brought up issues concerning wording in the revised 'Council Rules', which counsel stated are 'normal'; she is also concerned about the lack of accuracy and consistency of the City Council Minutes as there are several discrepancies noted by herself as well as others; she expressed the lack of need for a noise ordinance and brought up the severe disparity of charges for business licenses, and how smaller businesses are charged a disproportionate and unfair larger share of their profits to do business in this city.

Fire Chief (PORFD) Dave Duncan spoke next about his concerns for a burn ordinance within the city limits. He stated he is in favor of controlled open burns of brush and other green waste. He also stated they would like to check the water flows from the various hydrants around town. Councilor Clancy mentioned concerns about the possibility of 'water hammers' in the pipes and the affects on our water system at large during this testing.

Departmental Reports. Councilor Clancy asked the City Admin about the 'amphitheater' being rebuilt at Battle Rock Park. It was explained that this is the terraced stairway below the water fountain, suitable for sitting during the fireworks and other events. Councilor MacLeod asked about the sewer system smoke test results, and the letters sent out to property owners after the event requiring they repair their plumbing systems. City Admin Richards stated it was for “air quality and health related concerns” due to sewer gas leaking into the atmosphere – it was pointed out by Councilor Pogwizd that “sewer pipes have vents and are always open to the air”, making the point rather moot. [ed: *if you have sewer fumes entering your home, the odor should be your first clue.*] Councilor Clancy asked for clarification about the warning letters, and the City Admin stated it was informational only, and the repairs are NOT mandatory.

Police Chief Combs mentioned the flag flying at half-mast to honor 'Police Officer Memorial Day'. He also reported that Officer Rhodes' medical leave status is still pending.

The Planning Commission meeting was unceremoniously canceled Tuesday when the power at City Hall went out earlier in the day, with a simple hand written note taped to the door. Councilor Clancy questioned why this was done instead of moving the location, etc. as they were legally required to hold the meeting and wait until a quorum of commissioners arrived or not. Clerk Manes and Admin Richards had no other comment but to apologize for the indiscretion.

Councilor Liaison Reports. Councilor Clancy mentioned the PORFD Board is considering the purchase of a new truck. For Parks, Councilor Billings discussed the Battle Rock Park trails grant and what a success it has been [ed: *if you haven't been down to see it yet, you will be pleasantly surprised, its been very nicely done*], the work should complete this month – and it has been done using mostly 'inmate labor'. Additionally a new mower has been purchased for the park host. For the Port Commission Dianne mentioned the possibility of Congress passing a bill that would benefit the dredging cost at the dock. County Commissioner Smith presented information about the county budget, and the fact that they are raiding the county road fund reserves of \$1million to use for the Sheriff's Department.

The council was asked to approve a **rate adjustment for Curry Transfer & Recycling** (trash) of 1.1%. Pete Smart, from CTR, was present to make the request. Councilor Pogwizd asked about the Hazardous Waste program for local residents that we have been paying into. Pete mentioned it is bi-annual, and suggested we have the City Admin contact CTR and request it be held again in Port Orford. With a motion from Tim, second from Caroline, it was passed 6-0.

Next was the annual **Water/Sewer rate adjustment**, this year set at 2.5%. Motion was made by Councilor Clancy, seconded by Councilor MacLeod, passed 6-0.

Following this was a **resolution to 'establish a dedicated reserve fund'** for the water and sewer enterprises. Councilor Clancy made a motion to accept with the wording for the water reserve fund changed to reflect the fact that it was previously agreed that the fund was for

'replacement of existing water lines only', *not for general infrastructure use*, which might allow the funds get sidetracked into other projects. Dianne wanted more time to consider things and the mayor suggested she should make a motion to table the resolution – whereby Council President Pogwizd reminded the mayor that a motion was already in progress and a vote must be taken. The vote was Councilors MacLeod, Clancy and Pogwizd – Yes; Dianne, Bill and Jim – NO. The tie was broken by the mayor voting NO. Councilor Clancy then motioned the resolution be tabled, seconded by Dianne – passed with vote 6-0.

A discussion was held concerning the adoption of a city burn ordinance. Councilor Clancy said she is OK with burn barrels, but not large open burns mostly because of smoke related health issues. Councilor Billings agreed with burn barrels, but would like to hear a formal opinion from the PORFD. Councilor MacLeod also agreed with allowing burn barrels. Councilor Pogwizd concurred, but is concerned about lack of control over content and asked Chief Combs for an opinion, since he would have to enforce the ordinance. Again content is a major issue for him, and the fact that large open burns tend to smolder for long periods (ie, days), spreading ash and smoke over large areas due to the unpredictable wind we deal with here. Dianne expressed 'no opinion', but said "the pharmacy burn was unfortunate". The mayor said he is OK with burn barrels and fire department 'Burn To Learn' exercises. Councilor Clancy reminded him that the pharmacy burn was a 'Burn To Learn' that was allowed to smolder for days creating significant health issue to citizens. She also mentioned the current open burn on Madrona that has gone on for several days, and for the cost of a \$5 permit from the city.

Revised Council Rules were brought to the council with a motion for approval. Councilor Pogwizd asked about the new cut-off date for agenda items (Friday Noon before the meeting) and if would be too limiting. The city counsel said no, items can still be added at the beginning of the meeting as now. Bill asked "Why Friday?", Monday allowed enough time for review. Tim suggested that staff had let that drag on to the point the packet was often late, making timely review difficult. Bill made a motion to change the day back to Monday, whereby Tim pointed out a previous motion was still pending. The mayor called for a vote of the rules as presented – the vote was tied, with the mayor voting yes the motion passed.

The **Consent Calendar** was next which brought up several issues with the minutes of prior meetings. Councilor Clancy mentioned several errors and omissions concerning the minutes of the 4/17 meeting and the

resolution against National Marine Sanctuary. Teresa Kolibaba also brought forward errors and omissions from the 3/20 minutes. Recorder Manes said she did not always record discussions verbatim. Councilor Clancy emphasized the importance of exact verbiage and the intent conveyed, otherwise with abbreviated or omitted recordings this would be absent. The mayor suggested that the recorder could go over these minutes and make corrections. Councilor Pogwizd made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar with removal of items B & D (minutes from 3/20 and 4/17 respectively). The motion passed 6-0.

During **Citizen Considerations** the council and audience were inundated with an inappropriate deluge of political rhetoric favoring the proposed county charter by the mayor's friends and cohorts, including the **mayors of Brookings and Gold Beach**, for about 30 minutes [ed: *it was exhausting*].

Richard Hainey brought concerns about an agreement he had with the city to install a culvert and other drainage related items. Now the city has reneged on the original agreement. Admin Richards stated she consulted with an unnamed expert and chose a different solution than the original agreement. Public works crew will provide regular maintenance and monitor the drainage.

Teresa Kolibaba brought her concerns on open burn piles. She also wished to discuss the portable toilets at the Cedar Terrace PORFD site, but the CTR representative had left. In the spirit of the 8-76 discussions she mentioned her 1st amendment rights being violated as persons were constantly stealing the "NO on 8-76" signs from her yard. Lastly she stated that sewer lines all have vents to the atmosphere to allow air in for proper draining.

Jack Pruitt asked the cost of the recall election – the Finance Director stated the county billed the city \$2900. He also expressed his concern about open burns and that burn barrels are "smudge pots" full of various contaminants including plywood, paper, inks, etc. creating hazardous smoke. He is also opposed to 8-76 the county charter.

Gary Wickham mentioned his concern over various issues in the ocean at large, including dead zones and acidification. He passed out a list of websites with similar information. He also supports a National Marine Sanctuary in Port Orford.

Dave Bassett stated his displeasure with the political climate in Port Orford, calling it a place of "Polarized Opponents". [ed: *perhaps we are just more "Politically Organized" than he has bargained for.*]

Pat Rice is OK with burn barrels, and also pointed out additional errors and omissions from previous meeting minutes. She also had issues with the proper identification of documents and other information on the city website.

Bob Clifford discussed issues with his water bill. He requested and was granted a special hearing by the council – 10AM, Wednesday 5/21.

David Smith made additional comments related to county meetings and against measure 8-76.

During **Councilor Concerns**, Councilor MacLeod stated with the improvements to Battle Rock Park it looks the best is has in a very long time. Council President Pogwizd said we should "be respectful in spite of our differences, and work together".

Calendar of Events

Port Commission meets 3rd
Tuesday of the month:
May 20th, 2014 - 6PM

VOTE!

Please remember to vote and turn you ballots in to the depository, or mail in, as you prefer. It is our duty as citizens to participate in the act of democracy by exercising our right to vote and speak our minds at every opportunity.

VOTE!

"Those who surrender freedom for security will not have, nor do they deserve, either one"

- Benjamin Franklin

Notice

All submissions to the *Port Orford Free Press* must be made by email, in text only format – all other forms will be rejected.

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